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ABSTRACT

Two possible causes for the demands for research and publication on small college campuses are explored with a focus on the effect on promotion and tenure. The first hypothesis is that many administrators feel faculty research is a partner to faculty teaching effectiveness, and thus, if master teaching is the goal, faculty must excel at research. The second hypothesis is that the institution needs academic visibility, and most administrators feel research sets standards and produces role models for colleges that seek preeminence. Both hypotheses indicate a certain amount of pressure and tension between administration and faculty. Ways in which lack of research and publication affect tenure and promotion are discussed, noting the decline in the granting of tenure. More questions about the future of small college faculty are posed, examining research that says small college faculty are being asked to do more research than in the past, and that the end result of the teaching/research struggle may hurt college students more than anyone else. Small college faculty are challenged to think about what is truly important in teaching and research. Contains 16 references. (SM)

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Demands for Research and Publication at the Small College

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Demands for Research and Publication at the Small College

Somewhere in the last ten years, life on the small college campus seems changed. "Teaching effectiveness", once the universal buzz word, has been replaced with the 1980's buzz word, "research". Lack of research and publication, on behalf of even the most able faculty member, has resulted in loss of merit pay, promotion and most importantly, tenure. Faculty members, both those tenured and non tenured, are worried. There is a sense of uncertainty in the air. Therefore, this paper will explore two possible causes for demands for research and publication on the small college campus as well as the effect on promotion and tenure.

Of a variety of possible causes for demands for research and publication on the small college campus, two stand out:

Hypothesis 1: Many administrators feel faculty research is a partner to faculty teaching effectiveness. Therefore, if master teaching is the goal, certainly faculty must excel at research.

Hypothesis 2: The institution's need for academic visibility.

Both these hypotheses indicate a certain amount of pressure and tension between administration and faculty. Administrators want superior quality and so do faculty, but perhaps faculty are uncertain as to how to achieve this kind of distinction. What is the problem or should we refer to "problems"?

Weaver (1986) certainly captures the problem when he states, "In the majority of regional colleges and universities and probably in all community colleges, teaching loads both in size and range of subjects, as well as the lack of research facilities and support services make research very difficult. In these institutions, teaching effectiveness is usually stated as the principal criterion for faculty advancement but the issue of research and publication lives on as a source of tension among faculty, among departments and between faculty and administrators." Friedrich and Michalak (1983) comment of the correlation between teaching and research

in "Why Doesn't Research Improve Teaching? Some Answers from a Small Liberal Arts College." The authors believe that researchers are not seen as more knowledgeable, more interesting, or more enthusiastic. Nor do they seem to be any better at fostering desirable intellectual qualities in students (p. 145). Interestingly enough, two years later, Webster (1985), also questioned the relationship between research and teaching effectiveness. He described the syndrome as the "teaching/research myth. He felt that perhaps it was because some faculty would like it to be true. Many researchers unquestionably, would rather do research than teach. They find research more fun, more exciting, more rewarding and less constraining. It may be that they continue to believe that research enhances teaching in the face of evidence that it does not, so that they can justify the time they would spend doing it to people who would rather see them use the time teaching (p. 61).

Bringing a historical context to the teaching/research issue, Pellino, Blackburn and Boberg (1984) address the causes. They refer to the scientific and technological revolution of the 1960's. They state that increasing research productivity generated a large number of research studies on research. These studies addressed one question: What are the correlates of research? The three authors conclude, "Indeed, genuine ambiguity even exists as to what constitutes academic "scholarship," particularly in those insitutions that do not claim to have major research functions, such as community colleges and 4-year teaching insitutions (p. 103). Eble (1974), like Weaver and others, expresses concern about the difficulty in containing the phrase "teaching effectiveness." He questions the accuracy of the measures we commonly use to judge either learning or faculty teaching effectiveness. He states,"that grades, performance, or examinations, subjective assessment of teachers, and performance criteria are limited measures of student learning. Student ratings, self-evaluations, visiting of classes by peers of supervisors, informal feedback are similarly limited." (p. 453)

Weaver's (1986) solution to the problem is to develop one legitimate model of faculty scholarship - disciplinary research. The definition he assigns to this research is as a specific subset of scholarship and one that is part of an academic discipline's research program. He feels we need to be more creative in promoting other models of faculty scholarship that are compatible with our work lives.

Weaver's recommendations for optional research include: 1) book reviews or review articles (synthesize and critically reinterpret research results, identify the major sources of major debates, or show the

connections among findings in several different fields. 2) writing and publishing about one's own teaching , for example to design a syllabus (pp. 51-58).

In agreement with Weaver is the administrative position on my campus - Wesleyan College - on this teaching/research argument. Perhaps, like Weaver, Dr. Robert Ackerman, the President of Wesleyan College, acknowledges the importance of " intellectual vitality" in one's academic career. The thought of teaching without current knowledge of your field, without having read the latest journals and without being desirous of communication with one's colleagues is a pretty frightening thought. Ackerman in our last faculty meeting stated, "While publishing is admirable, it is only one method of pursuing "intellectual vitality. Other methods include innovative courses, exhibits, concerts, consultations, a reputation for excellence in teaching, and many other means of continuing intellectual stimulation."

This discussion brings this paper to our second hypothesis:

2) The need for institutional visibility.

It seems fair to say that most administrators feel research sets standards, and produces role models for colleges that seek preeminence. Are not strong, competent, visible researchers today's academic leaders? Do researchers and superior faculty join hands? Does not faculty visibility promote institutional visibility? Convention papers, whether state, regional or national, lend credibility to the presenter's institution. Journal articles and books whether co-authored or solo authored bring about a prestige not present before or reinforce the current prestige.

It is not only interesting, but also imperative that we listen to the perspectives of administrators regarding their views of institutional visibility. Colley (1984) , Associate Professor of English and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, describes in Vanderbilt University's updated tenure report "that many of the Vanderbilt faculty fear the University cannot improve unless we reserve tenure for only superior candidates. The tenure report cites faculty leaders from the University of Chicago and from Princeton who warn that "enough good appointments can kill an institution. According to this argument, the character and the future of a department can be determined by only a few people and if 'good' rather than 'excellent' people receive promotion and tenure, the department in

question will feel the effects for the next thirty to thirty-five years (p. 32). On the other hand, Michalak and Friedrich (1981) cite three developments as the cause of this widespread movement. Certainly, we can identify with at least one of these causes:

1. Universities were graduating from their advanced degree programs college instructors who were socialized to be less and less preoccupied with educating young people, more and more preoccupied with educating one another by doing scholarly research which advances their discipline.

2. Career-minded undergraduates saw a graduate degree as a prerequisite to success in life. They therefore sought to compile an academic record that was good enough-and at a college that was good enough to gain them admission to a respectable graduate program.

3. The rise of the University College , a high quality undergraduate school, served essentially as a prep school for graduate school. Administrators hired faculty from the best graduate schools who were increasingly socialized to "prefer research over teaching". The number of "university colleges" was not large-100 out of 2,000 undergraduate colleges in the U.S. However modest the size, the modeling theory went into effect: undergraduate colleges sought to build faculties of not just instructors, but "scholars" (pp. 579-597).

I'm sure we can all identify with at least one of these causes discussed by Michalak and Friedrich. My identification is with number 3. Yearly, faculty vacancies occur, and our division chair and the Academic Dean, seek to find through a national search the most qualified and prestigious faculty possible. We will use adjuncts to fill a faculty vacancy before hiring someone the faculty does not feel unanimously good about. Presently, our school boasts faculty from Vanderbilt, Notre Dame, Southern Methodist University, Harvard and the University of California.

Perhaps the core of the institutional visibility issue occurs when Seldin (1984) ably describes the "rating game" from the concerns of a New York dean. He sees high visibility for faculty as the name of the game. If they do research, publish journal articles, and present papers at professional meetings, they will be in the public eye (p. 33). This "rating game" may be less applicable to private colleges than to state schools, but still that concern exists.

Having examined two possible causes for increased faculty research and publication, we need to examine the results. First, let's return to Hypothesis 1 which addresses the assumption that many administrators feel faculty research is a partner to faculty teaching effectiveness. Research, as looked at in this paper, suggests that there is minimal correlation between being an effective teacher and excelling at research. Many researchers are concerned about the ambiguity of the term "research" and suggest that this may be where the problem lies. At the onset of my own research I anticipated that the literature review would address a higher correlation than it did between research and teaching.

Hypothesis 2 suggests that increased demand for research on behalf of small college campuses also could be attributed to the institution's need for academic visibility. Research confirms that the 1960's introduced some developments that caused this widespread movement. Also addressed in this paper is the administration's concern for quality tenured faculty. Is a "very good" faculty member good enough?

Having examined the results of the hypotheses, we now need to draw conclusions. How will lack of research and publication affect tenure and promotion? Or can a faculty member who is strong in teaching effectiveness, committee work, community service, student advising still bypass these areas and stay on the golden track? The one thing researchers agree on is the fact that there is a decline in tenure granting. Mangan (1989) acknowledges that "reasons for scrutinizing tenure vary from institution to institution. Many colleges that hired large numbers of faculty members in the expansive decade of the 60's now have 60 percent to 80 percent of their faculty members tenured." Mangan also points out that currently 63% of all faculty members have tenure, according to the 1988 survey of nearly 2000 institutions by the American Association of University Professors (pp. A10-A-12). You may be asking yourself, "What do these figures mean to us?" They may mean that it may become increasingly difficult currently to receive tenure, especially if the college has a tenure quota, such as an established 60-70% tenured.

Unlike Mangan, Loss (1983) is more specific than Mangan in discussing the decline in tenure granting. He attributes lack of tenure in small colleges to economic concern but confesses that "in spite of the lack of hard evidence, it seems clear that there are more young

academics being denied tenure today that there were a decade or so ago, and that the stakes for achieving tenure are becoming impossibly high at some places. Not only are spaces fewer, but many of those that do exist are not being filled." (p. 80) This brings to mind the concern many of us full time faculty have - that of adjuncts replacing the position of one full time faculty. It's not just the course load that needs to be considered, but advising and committee work.

Centra (1979) questions the evaluation of research and scholarship and their effect on tenure and promotion. His concerns are with the goals of an institution and the responsibility of a particular faculty member which determine the importance given to research. With fewer faculty members being awarded tenure and promotion, research and scholarship as well as teaching performance are receiving close scrutiny, focusing in particular on the quality and impact of an individual's work (pp. 119-120).

Beyond the tenure issues, we need to ask more questions about the future of small college faculty. It seems from research findings that we can assume that small college faculty are being asked to do more research than in the past. Depending upon the quality and the reputation of the institution, the degree of research expectations will vary. For those institutions seeking preeminence by the year 2000, such as the one where I teach, expectations will increase from year to year. Some faculty will respond to these demands and others will become discouraged.

Ethically, we as small college faculty need to ask the question :"Is what is being required of us fair?" If not, what do we plan to do about' it? Could another equation be substituted for traditional research? Is it possible to devise a rating scale whereby those faculty who want to concentrate on research may and those who would rather concentrate on being "master teachers" have the choice. Or could we even assign percentages to or contract for the degree of teaching effectiveness or research we would be willing to hold forth?

Besides being "fair," is what is being required in terms of research for the granting of tenure and promotion realistic? Is it not possible the phrase "Jack of all trades, yet master of none" may prove correct? Just how do we advise students, teach in the classroom, carry on research, do community service, chair committees, actively consult?

Who's really suffering in this teaching/research struggle? Those hurt may be the college's most precious commodity: its students. With

fewer persons receiving tenure, students see faculty in two and three person departments come and go, thus creating a climate of instability. Where interpersonal relationships are treasured between faculty and students, where advisors mean counselors and friends, stability of faculty does make a difference.

With the "new" research and publication expectations, what kind of pressure is being put on the newly "tenured" faculty who are supposed to act as role models for the acceptable standard. Recently, I was tenured at my small private liberal arts college, and I feel the pressures. I feel the burden and sometimes joy of serving as a role model for all those other nontenured faculty who are "waiting and watching".

This paper concludes with a challenge to all small college faculty to think about what truly is important. Is it teaching? Is it research? Can research and teaching be interdependent and complement one another? Does our definition of research need revision? Finally, this paper represents a challenge on how to produce a constructive not destructive model for this "increased age of research. My personal model may be like Dr. Robert Ackerman's, Wesleyan's President. Intellectual vitality, that's what it is all about.

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